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Congress of the United States House of Representatives

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(*PARTS OF)

4 March 2013

The Honorable Chuck Hagel
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Secretary Hagel,

As you step into your new role, you face new challenges. We would like to call your attention to a recent decision that has created substantial controversy.

We have recently learned that the Department of Defense has created the Distinguished Warfare Medal (DWM) to recognize extraordinary service that directly impacts combat operations. While we applaud the intent of the medal, we do not agree with placing the DWM above the Bronze Star and Purple Heart in the order of precedent.

The Purple Heart is awarded to service members who are wounded or killed in an action against an enemy of the United States. The Bronze Star may be awarded to a service member for valor or for meritorious service. It is a requirement that the service member be serving in an area designated by the Department as an imminent danger area in order to receive a Bronze Star. No such requirement exists for the DWM. The DWM is intended to recognize extraordinary service that directly impacts combat operations without regard to geographic location. We are supportive of recognizing and rewarding such extraordinary service but in the absence of the service member exposing him or herself to imminent mortal danger, we cannot support the DWM taking precedence above the Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

The current order of precedence for the DWM is a disservice to Purple Heart recipients who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our Country or were wounded while serving in combat. The imminent danger area requirement of the Bronze Star historically means that a service member has been deployed overseas for a military operation involving conflict with an opposing armed force. Our service members who are deployed in support of such military operations are separated from their families for extended periods of time and face the possibility of death or grievous bodily harm. Without any such requirement for the DWM, we also feel it is a disservice to our service members and veterans who have, or who currently are, serving overseas in hostile and austere conditions. We respectfully request that you lower the precedence of the DWM to an appropriate level below the Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

We thank you for your consideration on this matter and look forward to an open and positive relationship moving forward.

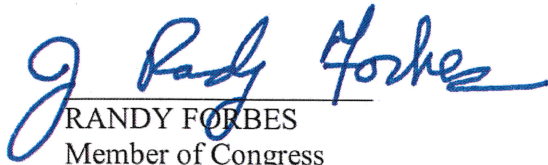
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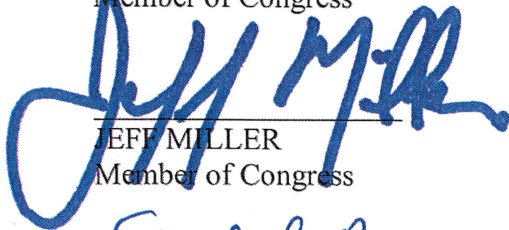
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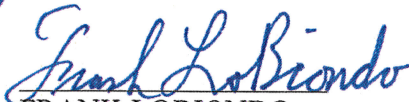
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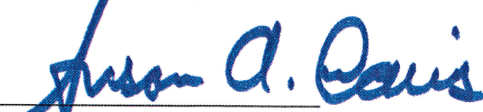


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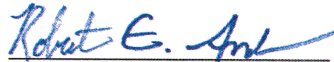
Sincerely,



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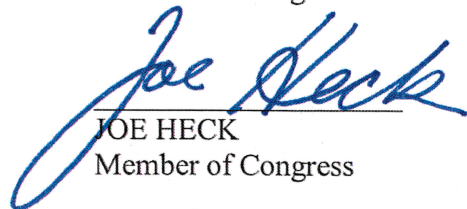


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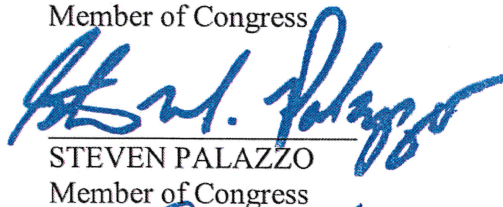


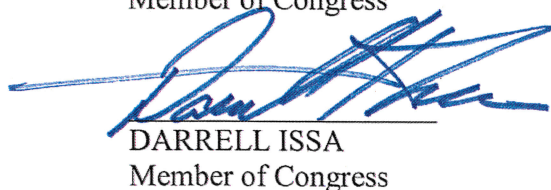
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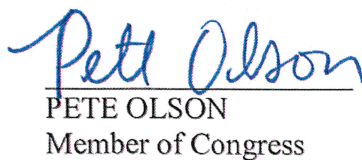

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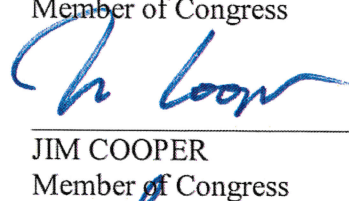

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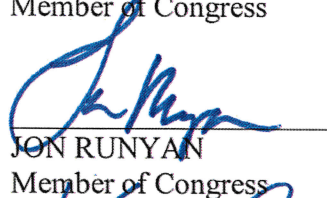

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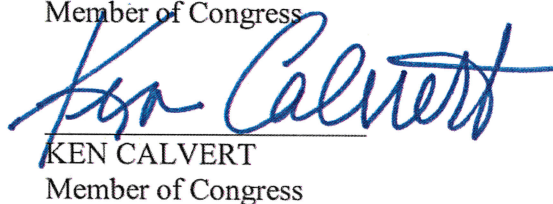

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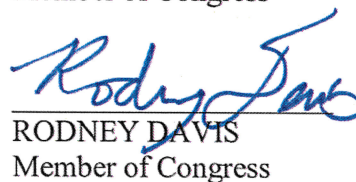

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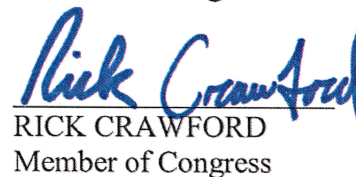

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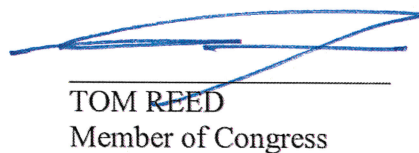

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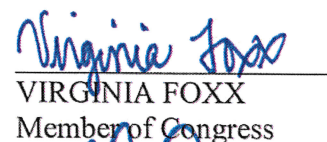

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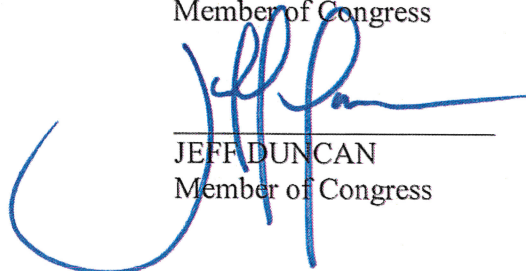

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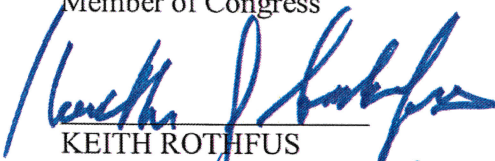

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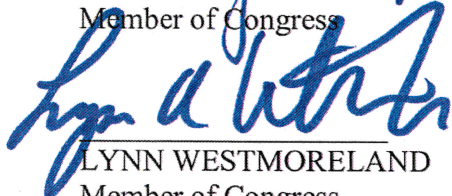
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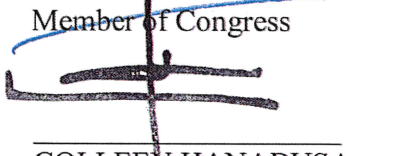
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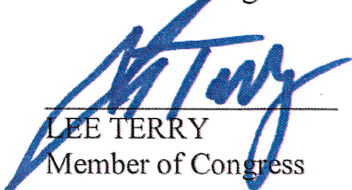
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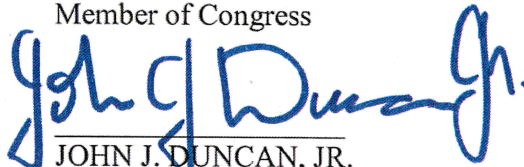
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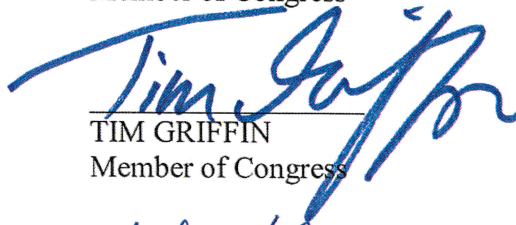
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